

Lighthouse Christmas

By Toni Buzzeo

This is a story of a lighthouse family getting ready for a bleak Christmas—no mother, little food, no presents. The day before they rescue a man during a storm that strands them. But to their delight the Flying Santa shows up and drops a bundle of much needed food and presents just in time. The endnotes give more information about this organization. The illustrations are wonderful and any child would enjoy hearing this story about a family who puts duty ahead of their own wants. This would be a wonderful addition to any library's Christmas collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Love, Mouserella

By David Ezra Stein

This is a book which is also a letter that Mouserella writes to her Grandmouse. She gives tidbits about her days, keeping her Grandmouse up-to-date on her pet caterpillar, ladybug and the things she and her brother are doing, all the while wishing they could visit Grandmouse. The letter form and the cute illustrations make this a great book for reading as well as teaching about the parts of a letter. I recommend this book for early elementary students and any library collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse

By Eric Carle

This is very much a traditional Eric Carle book, showing colorful animals but this time, painted by a creative artist. The illustrations and text are classic Eric Carle. This book is recommended for preschoolers mainly and any collection with Eric Carle would benefit.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Boy, Bird, and Dog

By David McPhail

Boy, Bird, and Dog is an I LIKE TO READ book, with a very simple text about a boy, bird and dog and their adventures getting into and playing in a tree house. This very simple text and the simple illustrations make this a great book for early readers to read by themselves. This book is recommended for any library or classroom collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

See Me Run

By Paul Meisel

This is an I LIKE TO READ book, about a pack of dogs and the fun they have doing their doggie business—running, getting wet and digging. But the digging turns up an interesting ending. This very simple text and the simple illustrations make this a great book for early readers to read by themselves. This book is recommended for any library or classroom collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Dinosaurs Don't, Dinosaurs Do

By Steve Bjorkman

Dinosaurs Don't, Dinosaurs Do is a fun way to teach kids manners like: when to run and yell, how to play and eat, and on and on. Finally it's all summed up with the Golden Rule. This I LIKE TO READ book is not only good for teaching but also has a very simple text and the simple illustrations make this a great book for early readers to read by themselves. This book is recommended for any library or classroom collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Otis and the Tornado

By Loren Long

This is another in the Otis series about a tractor and his farm friends who get themselves into and out of trouble. In this story, a mean bull is causing all kinds of problems for everyone but when a tornado threatens the farm, Otis's quick thinking and bravery both save the animals and wins the bull's friendship. A great story with a great lesson or two tucked in. This book is recommended for young children through early elementary age and any library collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

The Snow Blew Inn

By Dian Curtis Regan

This is the story of a cat family who owns an inn. Emma is having a sleepover and waiting for her friend to come. But before it all gets started a storm strikes and the inn is filled to overflowing with guests. It looks like the sleepover won't happen, but Emma learns how to share. In the end, things turn out just fine. This book is recommended for early elementary aged kids and any library collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Race the Wild Wind: A Story of the Sable Island Horses

By Sandra Markle

This book is based on a real story. Horses arrived on this island and were left to roam wild. They formed family groups and survived cold and storms. The end notes help the readers tell what's real and what's fictionalized. This very well illustrated book will be a favorite for horse lovers of any age and would be a great addition to any library's collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

The Lion and the Mouse

By Rebecca Emberley

This is the story of the fable about the lion who saves a mouse and in the end is saved by the same mouse himself. The illustrations, by famous kids drawing expert, Ed Emberley, are very interesting and colorful and really make the book much more fun. The text is simple enough for early readers to tackle and this could be a part of any collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Blue Chicken

By Deborah Freedman

This is the story of one illustration in a farm book...that needs to be finished. One little chick from the illustration decides to help and spills blue ink everywhere...it's a huge mess. But then the chick solves his problem by spilling more water to clean things up. In the end the blue ink ends up where it needs to be in the sky, and all is well, until the chick decides to help paint the barn red. Who knows how that's going to turn out? This was a very fun, creative story for any age and for any collection.

Heather Reid, Homeschool parent, Omaha, Nebraska

Stonewall Hinkleman and the Battle of Bull Run

By Michael Hemphill and Sam Riddleburger

Stonewall Traveler Hinkleman is a twelve-year-old boy who has to accompany his parents when they take part in Civil War reenactments. With a name like Stonewall, you can guess that his parents were passionate about the Civil War. He would rather stay at home and play his Game Boy or watch TV but is taken along to play the bugle (which according to Stonewall himself he doesn't play worth a darn). When he forgets his bugle and must find a replacement, a strange man loans him one which, when Stonewall blows on it, it transports him back in time to the actual Battle of Bull Run where he meets his great-great-great-great Uncle Cyrus. Senator Dupree, another Civil War reenactor, has a pistol that intentionally transports him back to the battle; however, he has a sinister motive to change the outcome of the battle and therefore change the course of history. The senator's rebellious daughter, Ashby, who Stonewall has a crush on, is accidentally transported back in time as well. As Stonewall comes to know his uncle Cyrus, he realizes he was not a coward and with both his uncle's and Ashby's help, he works to save the course of history. This book is recommended for grades 4-6 as well as any library collection. I enjoyed this book. The battle scenes were described to show what war is like but not too vividly to discourage readers. It would be a great book to use on a unit of the Civil War, especially since Stonewall realizes when transported back to the battle, how valuable his knowledge about the Civil War is to him when trying to save history. The humor from the main character, Stonewall, is engaging. Submitted by Deb Daehnke

A String of Hearts

By Laura Malone Elliott

When the teacher assigns the class to make a valentine for everyone in class, Sam struggles. Mary Ann helps him get some ideas. He has no trouble making valentines for everyone except Tiffany. He works so hard on Tiffany's valentine, only to have her drop it and not notice. This book is recommended for grade levels Preschool – 3rd. This book contains many cute illustrations and would be a nice addition to a holiday collection.

Sharon Kinnan

The Best Horse Ever

By Alice DeLaCroix

Did you ever dream of having your own horse when you were little? Many children, especially little girls, have such dreams. And that dream comes true for nine-year-old Abby when her parents purchase the lesson horse she has been riding at the stables near their home. But Abby's best friend Devon doesn't seem to care about her new horse and it causes tension in their friendship. How can Abby fulfill her responsibilities taking care of her new horse and still maintain her friendship with Devon? This book is recommended for grades 2-4 and any library collection. This is a great book for any young child, especially girls who have or want to have their own horse. Without being preachy, the book talks about the responsibilities involved in taking care of such a large animal, and a couple of the perils involved. I would recommend it. I would have loved this book when I was a little girl hoping for that dream horse.

Deb Daehnke

Me & Jack

By Danette Haworth

Twelve-year-old Joshua Reed and his Air Force recruiter father move to a small Pennsylvania town during the Vietnam War. Joshua's mother died when he was only five so to provide him with a little companionship, his father takes him to the pound to adopt a dog. Joshua selects a dog and names him Jack. Only later does he find out that Jack, who is an usual looking dog, is a Pharaoh Hound, which at that time was very rare in the United States. Because of his different appearance, and his pension for hunting and protecting his master, the perception is that Jack is vicious. The townspeople don't trust Jack and blame him for several things that go wrong. While Joshua defends Jack, he must also defend himself from a boy who bullies him relentlessly and come to terms with how people perceive his father as a recruiter during the tumultuous Vietnam War years. In the end, Jack protects Joshua and the bully, proving he is not the mean dog people thought him to be. This book is recommended for grades 3-5 and any library collection. This was a very enjoyable book to read and should appeal to boys and girls. I started it and didn't put it down until I was finished. I would recommend it. It should be especially fun reading for young people who like stories about animals.

Deb Daehnke

More Pocket Poems

By Bobbi Katz

From Shakespeare to Katz this collection is full of a variety of poetry. This book is recommended for grades K – 6. This book contains illustrations to compliment a wide variety of poetry. This would be an excellent addition to a poetry collection!

Sharon Kinnan

Mouse and Lion

By Rand Burkert

The Mouse and the Lion is a retelling of an old story about a mouse who is caught by a lion. The lion thinks he is rather clever and plays with the mouse until he finally releases him. A long time later the tables are reversed and the lion is caught in a net trap. The mouse remembers his friend and slowly releases him. The moral of the story is, "Friends come in all sizes." Recommended for grade levels K – 2nd grade.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Lincoln Through the Lens – How Photography Revealed and Shaped An Extraordinary Life

By Martin W. Sandler

This is a pictorial work using mostly photographs of Abraham Lincoln, depicting how he changed throughout the years and how he used the new art of photography to enhance his political campaigns. Lincoln was the first American president to be photographed. There are many different photos of Lincoln, his family, and other relevant people of this period. Photography came upon the scene in 1839 adding an almost miraculous way to record things just as they were. The current photographers of this era did a remarkable job of capturing Abraham Lincoln. This book is recommended for grades 4-6. I believe a school library might find this more useful as a research text for studying Abraham Lincoln and early photography. This book has excellent pictures from the mid 1800's. I found this book very interesting even though when I first saw it I wasn't excited about reading it. There are some outstanding photos primarily of Abraham Lincoln but also of other people with a historical relationship to Lincoln (Ulysses S. Grant, John Wilkes Booth, Robert E. Lee). The photo that really caught my attention was "Children At War" and the corresponding description of how children were used during the Civil War. I would highly recommend this book. I think it would be an excellent resource for any school library.

Deb Daehnke

8 Class Pets + 1 Squirrel / 1 Dog = Chaos

By Vivian Vande Velde

Every class in the elementary school has a classroom pet. All is calm in the school until a dog breaks free from his chain to chase Twitch the squirrel into the respective classrooms of the school. Soon all the animals are being drug into the procession. The school is a disaster when the principal finally catches his dog. Reading Level is 2nd – 4th grades. The black pen and ink drawings help illustrate the animal characters in the story. The procedure of animals being added onto the parade brings to mind *The Bremen Town Musicians* or *The Gingerbread Boy*. The story would probably be hilarious to 2nd and 3rd grade students as a class read-aloud.

Kathy Muller

The Revolution of Sabine

By Beth Levine Ain

Sabine Durand has been raised as the daughter of Aristocrats in pre-revolutionary France. She has a mother who seems to love her only for the good marriage which Sabine could make with an important well-to-do family. Following social rules is all important to Sabine's mother. Sabine cannot think for herself or even decide whom she will marry. The backdrop of this book is France and the stories the French hear about the American Revolution. An interesting aspect of the story is that the servant class and workers were able to be more free-thinking than the lorded gentry who had to keep up appearances. Reading Level is 4th – 10th grades. References are made to stories by Voltaire and Thomas Paine's Common Sense. This could lead to further reading about the pursuit of freedom. This story could bring forth good discussions about freedom, thinking for oneself, and making decisions because others expect it of us or because it is the best choice.

Kathy Muller

Hot Diggity Dog

By Adrienne Sylver

Although the origins of the hot dog are not truly known, this story follows the hot dog through time...even into outer space! This book is recommended for grade levels K – High School. The story features many fact boxes within its pages, and is written in an interesting manner. This would be a book of interest to almost any age!

Sharon Kinnan

Pickle Impossible

By Eli Stutz

This book is a slapstick comedy, written by Aurore, about Pierre and herself taking the family pickle recipe to a competition to win \$100,000 and save the family farm. This book is recommended for grade levels Middle Elementary – High School. This story has a funny, twisted plot and is easy reading, but very interesting. This book would be a good choice for the older child who has a lower reading ability.

Sharon Kinnan

Too Many Turkeys

By Linda White

I loved this book! The pictures are so bright and colorful, and it really added a lot to the story. The story is about a farmer and his wife, who just happens to love to garden, live in a country with many close neighbors. One day a stray turkey arrives. The farmer builds a lovely house for the turkey and everything goes smoothly. But one day the wife goes to her gardening convention and a whole flock of turkeys arrive and take over the farm. Read what the farmer does to regain his farm and get his wife's flowers and garden back in shape before she gets home. This book is for readers in grades Pre-school to 3rd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Little Devils

By Robert J. Blake

Where do you find little devils? Why in Tasmania where little devils grow. Written as a favor for his young readers, the author creates a book on their favorite marsupials. These three little devils are dependent on their mother. Mom drags home strange items but the little fellas seem to like her selections. The play pretty rough, but that is the life of a Tasmanian devil. One day they are getting hungrier and hungrier, and their mom doesn't come back with those meals they count on so much. The day goes by and then it is night and Mom still isn't back. What to do, what to do? The babies start searching for their mother. Read the book to find out what happens and what they have to do! This book is recommended for grade levels K – 3rd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Animal House

By Candace Ryan

Jeremy's teacher thinks he belongs in a zoo. Jeremy agrees with his teacher. He lives in an animal house that can be seen out the classroom window! She gets so upset with Jeremy's imagination that she tells him she is going to visit him at home. If she doesn't like what she finds, he won't be going on the class field trip. With a delightful play on words throughout the whole book, the reader will appreciate the humor developed through the pictures. Mrs. Nuddle's visit is very exciting and action packed. After her visit to Jeremy's home, she decides to move into an anacondo! This book is recommended for grade levels Preschool – 4th grade.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

A Little at a Time

By David A. Adler

A growing boy has so many questions, and his grandfather answers each question, but ends with "a little at a time." Questions like, "How did the tree get so big," or "Why is the street so dirty?" They continue around the city on their walk, Grandpa patiently answering all of the boy's questions. The book is done with watercolor illustrations that are sort of muddy and a little out of focus to help the reader use his/her imagination as they continue on their walk. A nice book, but if I was on a budget, I would probably overlook it for something else.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Last Song

By James Guthrie

This is a small book with a very unusual cutout in the front cover. The book is about a couple of squirrels, told in rhyme, who are exploring their world. Very simplistic and the pictures are important for the child to grasp the meaning in the poetry. My story hour kids liked it, perhaps because the pictures were so neat. For grades Pre-school through 2nd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Picnic at Mudsock Meadow

By Patricia Polacco

I dearly love Patricia Polacco books. Her ability to write fiction, and in most of her books, her ability to share her family culture, is heartwarming. She relates, without sympathy, her parent's divorce, lack of money, and dealing with life's little tragedies. A master storyteller, with pictures that add so much to the book, you just have to love her. This book tells of the annual Halloween picnic where there are lots of contests and good food. Focusing on William and this lack of ability to win any of the contests makes one remember their own childhood. How sometimes things just don't go right. Usually her books end happy, as with this one. This book is recommended for grade levels Pre – 3rd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public Schools, Wynot, NE

The Geezer in the Freezer

By Randall Wright

The back of the book says, "Danger, Warning, Caution!" Never set foot inside a freezer. You could get stuck in there! This is the story of someone who did just that. Written in rhyme, you will chuckle from one end of the book to the other. A little boy's dilemma when he discovers a geezer in his grandma's freezer and what to do with him. The man finally tells the little boy his story and finally the little boy knows how to get the geezer out of the freezer. Loved the humor of this story! This book is recommended for grade levels K – 3rd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

The Blond of the Joke

By Bennett Madison

Val feels like an outsider, with no friends, until she meets unique and slightly over-the-top Francie. Soon Val is not bothering with homework, coming to class late, and even skipping classes altogether so she and Francie can hang out at the mall and shoplift. Other than one close call it would seem no one even takes notice of all the things they take. Though Val feels Francie, with her stupid blond jokes, is her best friend she doesn't totally understand Francie and feels there are no secrets about Francie's life. Though touted to be a "funny" book, there is really nothing funny about it. From time to time there is reference to Francie's insane mother and Val's dying brother and there is really no tie-in to the story. It seems to just be random thoughts that all revolve around shoplifting and how great it is. I'm not sure how this ended up on the Accelerated Reader list, but don't waste your time or that of young readers.

Diane Limoges

Operation YES

By Sara Lewis Holmes

Bo, whose father is an Air Force Colonel at the base they are stationed at, is starting 6th grade. His father is expecting better things from him this year. Gari, Bo's cousin, is staying with them while her mom is deployed, as a nurse, in Iraq. Gari does not want to be there and now she's in the same class as Bo. Miss Loupe, their new teacher, loves improvisation and tapes out a space in the classroom as a stage where anything can happen. Miss Loupe's brother becomes missing in action and Gari changes her plans of leaving to stay and work with Bo, and the rest of the class, on "Operation YES" to do something good for Miss Loupe and her brother. This book is recommended for grade levels 4th and up. Here is a very humorous story that gives a little insight into the lives of families deployed in a war zone as well as teaching that working together can be fun. Even the seemingly impossible is possible when you work together. Finally we have an A+ accelerated read.

Diane Limoges

Chalice

By Robin McKinley

Mirasol is the new Chalice of Willowsland with very little experience. When the Master is killed in a fire leaving no heir, his brother, who is a Priest of Fire and no longer completely human, returns to take up the position. No longer quite human, the young master must use great caution not to burn anyone with his touch. Now the overseer has appointed a non-blood heir who he wants to see take over as master. When the young Master is challenged to a duel for the position, the Chalice has to do her best to bind the fractured realm and save her Master. Reading level 7th and up. Though well-written, the first 2/3rds of the book is really draggy, with a lot of explaining and setting the scene. I'm sure even the most avid mythical reader will truly enjoy this book.

Diane Limoges

A Boy had a Mother Who Bought Him a Hat

By Karla Kuskin

The boy's mother buys him very unusual things, one right after another. The reader could predict what he might get next. The end of the story is really a surprise! I was trying to predict the ending and was very wrong. Another question for kids – "Would you like a mother who bought you everything?" Reading levels Pre-School to 2nd. There are wonderful, colorful illustrations by Kevin Hawkes – good repetitive sequence, great rhyme and cadence. The children would be able to repeat some of the repetition in phrases. This reminds me of the sequence of the Gingerbread Man and Journey Cake Ho. There are many comprehension skills which can be practiced with this book – sequence, remembering phrases, rhyming words and the cadence of a poem.

Excellent book!

Kathy Muller, Gardner Public Library

Jefferson's Sons

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

This book was told from the point of view of the black slaves at Monticello and also from the view of Thomas Jefferson's children with the slave, Sally Heming. It does an excellent job of helping the reader feel the complexities of living in the slave world and also living as a light-colored free man. This book is recommended for young adult and adult readers. The family tree of Thomas Jefferson's family with his wife Martha Wayles and with Sally Hemings is helpful as you read about the characters in the story. The Afterword tells the facts as the author researched them and also the parts of the story which were more fiction. Another valuable part to the book is the list of other places to go for further information about Thomas Jefferson. This is an excellent book. The author chose to tell the story from the viewpoint of the Heming family. It helps the reader see the pressure that light-skinned and freed slaves were under. Super way to look at history!

Kathy Muller, Gardner Public Library

Princess Posey and the First Grade

By Stephanie Green

This is a chapter book whose story tells about Posey who likes to wear her pink tutu and will be starting 1st grade in the fall. She is a little nervous about being dropped off in front of school and having to walk down the blue hallway all by herself. But after meeting Miss Lee, her new teacher who has come up with a fantastic way to have each of her students start their first day of school, everything is fine. This book is recommended for readers Kindergarten – 2nd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Willy

By Geert De Kockere

Willy was an elephant who had two big ears that he used to listen very closely to everything that was going on. He also had a tiny little tail that he could write and paint and draw with. He had four very large legs that he could balance on. He was very much in demand, people welcomed him everywhere. So if you are a person with just one of these things, not all three; you should be glad and make the most of what you have.

Recommended reading levels, Kindergarten- 3rd

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE

Mommy is a Soft Warm Kiss

By Rhonda Gowler Greene

This book shows how much fun a daughter and mother can have all through the year. The pictures are delightful and add much to the story. It shows them doing stuff together during the seasons. A nice little story that I think small children would enjoy. For readers in grades pre-school through 2nd.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School, Wynot, NE